

Listing of Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (currently amended) Apparatus for forming fibres or flakes of material comprising means (1) for producing a heated stream of molten material (9), means (3) for feeding the stream in a substantially vertically downward direction, means (7) for receiving the downwardly directed stream and for forming fibres or flakes therefrom, and means (11, 13, 15, 17) for effecting a change in the temperature of the stream subsequent to the production thereof whereby fibres or flakes of a desired thickness are obtained, wherein ~~the vertically downward moving stream is a free-flowing one and~~ said temperature changing means are means for directly heating the stream by application thereto of microwave radiation or electric current while the stream is traveling unenclosed in a vertically downward direction.

2. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the apparatus is additionally provided with means for cooling the stream prior to it being fed in a downward direction.

3. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein the cooling means includes a conduit (3) through which the stream is fed, said conduit being surrounded by a cooling coil or jacket (23) through which an appropriate fluid may be fed.

4. (previously presented) Apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the apparatus is additionally provided with mass or volume flow control means.

5. (currently amended) A method for forming fibres or flakes of material comprising producing a heated stream of molten material, feeding the stream in a substantially vertically downward direction, receiving the downwardly directed stream and forming fibres or

flakes therefrom, and effecting a change in the temperature of the stream subsequent to the production thereof whereby fibres or flakes of a desired thickness are obtained, characterized in ~~that the vertically downward moving stream is a free-flowing one and that the change in the~~ temperature of the stream is affected by directly heating the stream by application thereto of microwave radiation or electric current while the stream is traveling unenclosed in a vertically downward direction.

6. (previously presented) A method according to Claim 5, wherein, in addition to effecting a change in the temperature of the stream, a change is effected in the mass or volume flow of the stream.

7. (new) Apparatus for forming fibres or flakes of material comprising means (1) for producing a heated stream of molten material (9), means (3) for feeding the stream in a substantially vertically downward direction, means (7) for receiving the downwardly directed stream and for forming fibres or flakes therefrom, and means (11, 13, 15, 17) for effecting a change in the temperature of the stream subsequent to the production thereof whereby fibres or flakes of a desired thickness are obtained, wherein said temperature changing means are means for directly heating the stream by application thereto of microwave radiation or electric current while the stream is traveling in a vertically downward direction, and wherein the temperature means is spaced apart from the stream as the stream travels through the temperature changing means.